

COMMUNION MEDITATION II

by Lester J. Start

Undated

[Mark 8:22 - 37]

COMMUNION MEDITATION

Text: Mk 8:34b Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.

The significance of the celebration of the Lord's Supper can be found, I think, in the words of instructions which Jesus gave his disciples at that meeting in the upper room. They are the words carved on this beautiful communion table, words which we should keep in mind whenever we join together in the Lord's Supper, if it is to be meaningful to us and not a mere form. These words of Jesus to the disciples and to us are: Do this in remembrance of me.

These words are very important, I believe, for they mean something much more than a mere recollection of the figure of Jesus; they point to that blameless life which was given for the sake of mankind. As we remember this life, we are filled with a reverent wonder at the meaning of this life, and a sense of loving gratitude for its power in our lives. But more than this, - if we really follow Jesus' instructions to "do this in remembrance of me", we must think of the guiding principle of Jesus' life, the devotion which empowered him to do what he did, -we feel we must seek this guiding principle and follow it in our own lives.

As we remember the life of Jesus, we are always impressed first of all by the fact that he was always seeking to help his fellow man. He dedicated his life to a degree never since even approached by man. His life was that of a servant to humanity and through his life we see the power of which comes from God to those who truly follow his will. It is this spirit of love and devotion to one's fellow man, this ideal of loving one's neighbor as oneself, which we remember as we think of Jesus. And it is important that we think of this often, that we be constantly reminded of it, for it is so easy to forget in this world where it is much easier to believe that God helps those who help themselves.

Jesus stated this requirement of man when he warned his disciples: Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. This is the message we must remember as we think of the life of Jesus, as we partake of the Lord's Supper in remembrance of him. To deny the self: that is the difficult thing for us to do. To move out of our egocentric worlds and cease thinking that others exist for us, and believe that we live for others instead - that is what we are reluctant to do. And it is little wonder, for our whole world is geared on an egocentric basis; we are forever being reminded to think of ourselves first wherever we look. We have only to look at our advertising in magazines and newspapers to become painfully aware of this - unless we are so used to it that we do not notice anymore. The appeal is always to what will make the individual healthier, more beautiful, wealthier or wiser. A composite of the self-satisfied people we meet in the ads is a horrible thing to contemplate. Our popular entertainments

also make the same sort of appeal - the blurbs advertising movies tell you just how you will benefit by seeing the picture. Unfortunately this same emphasis is seen more and more in popular education. The value of studies is measured by the hard, practical modern mind strictly in terms of dollars and cents. One gets an education in the first place so that he can gain more benefits for himself, not in order to be more effective in helping others, and he chooses only those studies which can be converted into a big job, instead of those which help him understand humanity and realize his destiny in that humanity.